

Positive Handling Policy

Courthouse Green is adopting an informed, evidence-based decision to allow positive handling of children in special cases as a developmentally appropriate intervention that will aid healthy emotional growth and learning. If children are behaving in an unacceptable, threatening, dangerous, aggressive or out of control way then staff will consider using safe touch as one of the means available to them to resolve the situation. Through the use of de-escalation tactics and positive behaviour management strategies, every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to pupils or staff, property, buildings or the environment. Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention of use of reasonable force the school will follow the procedures outlined within this policy.

What is reasonable force?

Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from a guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed. (DfE 2013)

Who can use reasonable force?

This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

When can reasonable force be used?

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and will always depend on individual circumstances. School leaders will support staff when they have used this power. Positive handling will be used to prevent a child causing harm or injury to themselves or others or to property.

The safe holds that we use are:

1. Escorting / Guiding
2. Low level restriction
3. Cupped first hold
4. Straight arm immobilisation
5. Seated rest

Any physical intervention must:

- be **proportionate** in scale and nature to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled and the nature of the harm they may cause;
- take due account of all the circumstances, including any known **history** of other events involving the individual to be controlled;
- use the **minimum necessary** force;
- be applied by staff who are able to use safely **techniques** with which they are familiar and have been trained in. A child's personal Handling Plan will be followed where in place.
- where possible be part of carefully planned responses to individual children known to be at risk of self-harm or of harming others.

Planned physical intervention will be agreed in advance by staff working in consultation with the child and those with parental responsibility and described in writing and incorporated into other documentation which sets out a broader strategy for addressing the pupil's behavioural difficulties.

Unplanned or emergency intervention may be necessary when a pupil behaves in an unexpected way. In such circumstances, members of staff retain their duty of care and any response must be proportionate to the circumstances. Staff should use the minimum force necessary to prevent injury and maintain safety, consistent with appropriate training they have received.

Training

Named members of staff will have positive handling training to ensure they know how and when to hold children in safe ways within government guidelines. This knowledge will be combined with the Thrive approach so that all staff can identify and use safe touch as a developmental intervention.

Thrive approach

- Adults should use strategies to calm the child's emotions by attuning to the child and staying calm. Ways of regulating children's emotions include slowing ones pace, lowering the voice, validating the child's experience eg. I can see you are angry and feel upset because....
- If holding is needed to calm and soothe emotions then adults must explain what they are going to do.
- Ensure another adult is present to support and use the holds outlined above.
- Validate the child's experience by saying "I am sorry this is so hard for you. I am going to keep you safe. I will hold you until you are calm again."
- Keep holding the child until you can feel they are calm again. Describe how you can feel they are calming eg. I can feel your heart beat slowing down, your breathing is slowing down, you are talking calmly.
- When the child is calm and some time has passed, debrief the situation to develop 'learning to think'. Always discuss "I wonder what we could do to help you next time you are becoming extremely upset".

Situations which may require restrictive physical intervention

The incidents fall into three broad categories:

- Where action is necessary in self-defense or because there is an imminent risk of injury (e.g. a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil)
- Where there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property.
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline (e.g. a pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom or is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson).
- To conduct a search without consent for prohibited items including knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco, fireworks, pornographic images.

Recording

All incidents must be recorded on cpoms. Where physical control or restraint has been used parents will be informed verbally before the child goes home.

The log on cpoms must include:

- Where and when the incident took place and why it was thought necessary to use reasonable force.
- Describe the events leading up to the incident.
- Describe what actions were taken to de-escalate the situation.
- Describe what hold was used and for how long.
- Record any injuries to staff or child or any damage to property.
- Describe what has happened following the incident.

Action after an incident

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and the child and staff involved have an appropriate debrief. Debriefs with the child and the adult will take place as soon as is practicably possible. Following an incident a Risk Assessment and Handling Plan will be drawn up to ensure procedures are appropriate and meet the needs of the child. These plans will be passed to all staff involved with the child.

Assaults on members of staff

If the Headteacher receives a complaint from a member of staff who has been assaulted by a child or young person, the Headteacher must provide immediate support and help to the member of staff to deal with their reactions to the assault and to re-establish confidence. The incident will be reported to the school's designated LA officer and the Chair of Governors and also the Local Authority.